

**THE TOWER OF  
TADDEO; IN THREE  
VOLUMES, VOL. III**

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The tower of Taddeo; In three volumes, Vol. III by Ouida

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**OUIDA**

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THE TOWER OF TADDEO

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TOWER OF TADDEO

BY

OUIDA, *pseud.*

AUTHOR OF 'UNDER TWO FLAGS,' ETC.

*De la Route, Lorient*

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.



LONDON  
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1892

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## THE TOWER OF TADDEO

### CHAPTER XV.

'WILL you come to supper, madami-gella? It grows late,' cried the rough voice of Veronica from the inner chamber, where their frugal table was spread.

She was a good-hearted woman, but in her manner she permitted herself to be rougher, ruder, more boisterous of late; she did not see why she should not add violence to her nature, why she should trouble herself to speak softly,

and stir noiselessly, to please folks who had the sheriff's officer coming to their doors every day.

'Madamigella has always wanted as much observance as if she were a queen. Eh! much she will get of it now,' said the serving-woman, with her arms akimbo, and a frown and a laugh together on her face, to her devoted listener, the boy Poldo. She was angered that the evening meal was thus delayed, and her own work thus prolonged.

'Nobody lets you be proud if you are poor,' added Veronica, with accurate knowledge of human nature.

'The signorina is not proud, not a bit proud,' said Poldo; 'but she has a way with her which makes you feel small,



and when she looks at you she cows you, though she is kind.'

'Ay, ay, and won't they pay her off for all that now?' said Veronica, who was vexed and pained by the woes of her employers, yet found a certain relish in them. It fretted her to think that the whole quarter would see the hateful *Banda* swinging under the majolica angels and amorini; and yet it brought her importance and excitement to gossip about it all at the greengrocer's and the cheesemonger's, the butcher's and the tinman's, and to say with satisfaction: 'It does not matter to me—no, no—I have a fine nest-egg of my own in the savings bank, and I am torn in two with people who want me to go to them. I want nobody's bed or board; it would

be well for them if they could say as much, poor souls! but the master was always up in the clouds, and never saw the dirt which lay in his path, or the stones that he stumbled over. Leave? oh yes, I shall leave, of course; the saints befriend them, when I am gone! They will want help sorely.'

Between her humiliation at such disasters befalling a family which she served, and her importance at being the bearer of such dreadful news to the gossips of Santo Spirito and San Jacopo, she did not know whether she was the more glad or the more grieved, at the events which had cast such gloom over the peaceful life in the tower. The boy was wholly sorrowful. Nowhere would he find another mistress so thoughtful

for his creature comforts as Madama Beldia.

It was dull work, indeed, copying and yawning amongst those musty old volumes, where never a laugh was heard or a joke was made. But then, in compensation, what abundance of good wheaten bread, of sound red wine, of fritters, of pickles, of macaroni, of polenta, and of summer and winter fruits !

The Vestuccio children would henceforth devour those grapes and figs, those nuts and walnuts of Antella, which had been his summer and autumn joys ; and he had heard the chandler say to the charcoal-seller : ‘ I shall give the tower folks no more of anything unless they pay ready money ; they have not a penny